

Homesteading Reconsidered
Symposium
Lincoln, Nebraska
May 17-19, 2007



The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Center for Great Plains Studies and Homestead National Monument of America, a unit of the National Park System, are working in partnership to present an interdisciplinary symposium on the subject of *Homesteading Reconsidered*. This event will take place Thursday-Saturday, May 17-19, 2007 on the Lincoln campus of the University of Nebraska.

The Homestead Act of 1862 was a major event in the history of America's westward expansion. Whether for good or ill, nearly every aspect of life in the West was somehow impacted: agricultural production; immigration and migration patterns; American Indian populations; industrialization; land speculation; natural ecosystems; and more. By the time of its final repeal in 1986, the Homestead Act had been responsible for the distribution of over 270 million acres of land in thirty of the fifty states.

Historians have tended to view the Homestead Act as either the smashing success of a benevolent government or a complete failure plagued by fraud and illegal land acquisitions. The purpose of the *Homesteading Reconsidered* symposium will be to examine the homesteading legacy from all angles and leave the participant to develop his/her own opinion of the true value and historical significance of the Homestead Act.

The views and experiences of native peoples are a special emphasis for this event. American Indian tribal members, scholars, and students are particularly encouraged to submit papers for consideration.

Subjects of interest for consideration in the event's program include, but are not limited to:

- Native American views of homesteading and federal land policies;
- Ecological impacts on the natural environment of the West;
- The importance of technology to homesteading and westward expansion;
- Cultural and social changes initiated by westward migration and the retention of cultural and social values by those groups and individuals that emigrated;
- The role of homesteading and agriculture in the formation of the modern West;
- The legacy of the Homestead Act (or anti-legacy, as many ethnic and cultural groups may view it);
- The role of land speculation and fraud in fulfilling or dooming the government's intended uses of the Homestead Act;
- Past historical remembrance and interpretation of homesteading and Western history;
- The "future" of homesteading and modern homesteading programs.

For more information, please contact:

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